

FINAL DRAFT
5/19/77

MARY HARTMAN

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EPISODE #320

by

Peggy Goldman

A
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PRODUCTION

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY	LOUISE LASSER
TOM	GREG MULLAVEY
MARTHA	DODY GOODMAN
CATHY	DEBRALEE SCOTT
GEORGE	PHIL BRUNS
WANDA	MARIAN MERCER
MERLE	DABNEY COLEMAN
BARTH	MARTIN MULL
ADELINE	FRAN RYAN
MICKEY MOE	TONY PALMER
ANGELA	SHARON SPELMAN
BUZZ	CHARLES SIEBERT
H.V.	RON FEINBERG

SETS

ACT I
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INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY
(Merle, Wanda, Adeline, Mickey Moe,
Buzz and Angela)

ACT II
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SHUMWAY KITCHEN - DAY
(Martha, Cathy, George and Barth)

ACT III
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MARY'S KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY
(Mary, Tom, Cathy, Martha, George
and H.V.)

ACT ONEINT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

THIS IS A VERY SMALL ROOM: TWO BEDS, TELEVISION, UGLY LANDSCAPES AND ANIMAL PAINTINGS ON THE WALL. THERE IS A DOOR TO ADJACENT BATHROOM. THE DOOR IS OPENED FROM OUTSIDE. WANDA, WITHOUT REALLY CHECKING IT OUT, CHEERILY WELCOMES THE JEETERS TO THEIR NEW HOME WITH A FLOURISH. ON THE WALLS ARE LOUSY PAINTINGS OF LARGE-EYED CATS.

WANDA

I've always wanted to take up residence in a hotel. There's something tres chic about it. Stunning.

SHE ABSORBS THE ROOM. HER FACE FALLS. MERLE, ADELINE AND MICKEY MOE LOOK AROUND IN SHOCK. 

MERLE

There's stunning, Wanda, and then there's ... (GESTURES) ... stunning.

MISS ADELINE

This here Bide-A-Wee motel is what the folks at the triple "A" invented their recommended list for -- to warn folks off dumps like this.

WANDA

(DESPERATELY TRYING TO SALVAGE THE SITUATION) Oh, come on, it's not so bad. We'll take down the... "art" work here. I've never been fond of oils of starving cats.

WANDA PUTS A MERLE JEETER CAMPAIGN POSTER UP OVER THE PAINTING AS:

MISS ADELINE

(CHECKING OUT BATH) Have you looked in here? There ain't no bathtub here! How in hell am I gonna relax without a bathtub?

MERLE

(GLARING AT HER) I hope you don't feel you have to be with us in our discomfort, Mommy. Wanda and I can see ourselves through this time of shame and humiliation just fine. In fact, why don't you not unpack your disgusting shopping bag and hop the next bus home?

MISS ADELINE

I belong with you, sonny. If my great great grandma could abide the misery of that sailing ship, I guess I can put up with this. The Jeeters are pioneers from way back. (ON BED, FEET UP) Toss me a beer, Mickey Moe.

MICKY MOE IS SITTING ON FLOOR IN CORNER WITH BEER AND FISHING ROD. HE THROWS HER A CAN OF BEER, SHE CATCHES IT, OPENS, DRINKS.

MERLE

(TO MICKEY MOE) What about you? Could I interest you in a one-way ticket someplace? Any place?

MICKEY MOE

Thanks, but you're gonna be needing me now.

MERLE

How do you figure that?

MICKEY MOE

We're gonna have to eat, and scandal don't fill empty stomachs. I can keep us in catfish, easy. Maybe even a rabbit once a week.

WANDA

You're sweet, Mickey Moe.

MERLE

(YECH!) Rabbits and catfish?! Oh, how the mighty hath fallen. (TEARY, TO WANDA) Tell me, Wanda, how did it come to this? Why has this been my fate?

WANDA

It's so thoughtful of you to think of my disappointment, Merle. I know how terrible you feel about my being dragged through this mire of humiliation with you, but I wouldn't have had it any other way.

MERLE

Thank you, Wanda.

MISS ADELINE

Stop whinin', boy. I'm the one who has
to go to bed tonight without a good soak.

MICKY MOE

Stay strong, Mommy. I'll protect you.

MERLE

Here I am, one of the truly great
Americans of our time, and I'm living
with my entire family in a single motel
room that's lacking a bathtub... to
drown 'em in.

WANDA

Buck up, big guy. Just remember all the
great men throughout history who've been
unjustly accused, persecuted, even
ridiculed by the public, only to recover
and rise to even greater heights.

MERLE

Name one.

WANDA

(RACKS HER BRAIN) Unfortunately, all the
people who immediately spring to mind were
either publicly executed or else died long,
lonely, deaths in abject poverty. But
I'll keep thinking.

KNOCK KNOCK. ADELINE GETS IT. ←
BUZZ AND ANGELA, ANGRY, STORM IN.

ANGELA

Aha!

BUZZ

We've been looking for you all over town.

ANGELA

Hiding out, huh?

MERLE

I have a few things to say to you two.

BUZZ

(HOISTING PAD AND PENCIL) Fine. The Daily Worker asked us for a statement from you.

MERLE

What I have to say can't be quoted in any family periodical.

ANGELA

Just give us a brief admission of how you deceived us into believing you were genuine Communists instead of the corrupt, capitalistic, exploitive politicians you are.

BUZZ

And perhaps a few details on the conspiracy you were involved in to infiltrate our forces and subvert our legitimate policies.

WANDA

Is it tactless of me to point out that you are lying, traitorous dogs.

BUZZ

(THROWING DOWN A NEWSPAPER) That's not the way the story runs in every newspaper this side of the Volga.


ANGELA

In fact, I think "lying, traitorous dogs" was the caption under your pictures in the Fernwood Courier.

MERLE

Why you...! Out! This may not be much, but it's my home and I'm throwing you subversives out!

HE DOES, SLAMS DOOR. SINKS ONTO BED
AS MICKEY MOE READS THE PAPER. MISS
ADELINE IS SEEN AGREEING WITH THE
STORY, WANDA AND MERLE CATCH HER,
SHE KEEPS NODDING.



MICKEY MOE

Lookie here at this headline: "Jeeter Faces Impeachment." It's a good thing you're my big brother, Merle, or I might be tempted to believe this terrible things they're saying. (TSK) "Mayor Jeeter misled the people of Fernwood as no elected official has since 1921 when city comptroller Simon Abyss disappeared with all the assets of the town treasury. In the opinion of this paper, though, that theft is nothing compared to the moral deception perpetrated on Fernwood by Merle Jeeter."

WANDA SITS BY MERLE, RUBS HIS SHOULDERS.

MERLE

The system doesn't work, Wanda. I should be unpacking in the Oval Office, not a six dollar a night motel.

MISS ADELINE

Six dollars and no bathtub! I'm p.o.'ed.

MICKEY MOE

(TO ADELINE) You can come dangle in the creek while I catch us our dinner.

MERLE MOANS A LOT.

WANDA

I'll be alright, dear. Maybe Mickey Moe will catch lots of catfish and he can sell some and then we can move into the seven dollar a night room -- it has a bathtub.

SMALL CONSOLATION AS WE:

FADE OUT.

ACT TWOSHUMWAY KITCHEN - DAY

CATHY IS ALONE, SITTING AT THE TABLE, MULLING. SHE LOOKS AS IF SHE HAS BEEN CRYING, BUT IS NOW QUITE CALM. BARTH ENTERS.

BARTH

Hey ho! Anyone home?

CATHY DOESN'T RESPOND. SHE SEEMS TOTALLY ABSORBED IN HER OWN THOUGHTS -- IT'S AS IF SHE HEARD HIM AND CONSCIOUSLY DECIDED TO IGNORE IT. WHAT'S ON HER MIND IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING BARTH GIMBLE COULD HAVE TO SAY.

BARTH (CONT'D)

(COMES IN, SPOTS CATHY) Hiya, Cathy.

What's the matter, stuck for a big comeback line? "Hello, Barth" will do. Not great but it'll do. I need a couple of magazines, do you have time?

CATHY

(A LITTLE PISSED AT THE INTRUSION) As a matter of fact, no. Time is exactly what I don't have.

BARTH

Hey, that's not bad. How about Newsweek?

(MORE)

BARTH (CONT'D)

You're stumped on that one, there's no pun for Newsweek. I know, I've tried hard enough to come up with one at many newsstands.

CATHY

Go away, Barth. I'm not in the mood.

BARTH

Garbo, right? Can you do Ann-Margret?
I'd like to do Ann-Margret.

CATHY

I'm serious, Barth. I'm in no mood for your dumb jokes right now. They may be your defense against the world, but they're not what I need right now.

BARTH

(SOBERED) You're right. They are my defense. I'm sorry, if they don't amuse you. I should be more honest instead of being moronic. (REALIZES THIS IS A GOOD JOKE) Hey, I've gotta remember that one.

CATHY

Barth, listening to your gags just doesn't strike me as the most valuable way to spend what may be my last minutes.

BARTH

Do you realize you're sounding morbid.

CATHY

So would you if you'd found out that you might be dying.

BARTH

Well, you shouldn't be left alone to dwell on it. Your folks or somebody should be with you at all times.

CATHY

Are you kidding? It took me two hours to get rid of them all. I wanted to be by myself for awhile. I keep hoping it's going to be like Ben Gazzara and I'll go off around the world and have a lot of terrific episodes until that last minute.

BARTH

Yeah, but that's TV, not life. Or "death" for that matter.

CATHY

Thanks.

BARTH

Sorry.

CATHY

I keep thinking of all the things I'm going to miss out on -- like I'll never see Airport '78.

BARTH

It probably won't be any good, anyway.

CATHY

Maybe not, but I've seen all the other ones, I would have liked to see it. And I feel awful for my folks. I'm off the hook -- I'm dead. But they'll have to go on, and I know they'll be miserable about it for the rest of their lives.

BARTH

But they're miserable anyway. You're a nice kid, Cathy. I wish there was something I could do to help out. The only thing I'm good at is kidding around, and you said you weren't in the mood for that.

CATHY

Maybe I should try to have a few laughs. Thanks, Barth. It's hard to believe you're actually able to talk seriously.

BARTH

Hey, that's the kind of guy I am -- "real".

CATHY

You always seemed to be obsessed with making the big buck by, oh, sort of exploiting people. It's nice to know that you do care. We Shumways have had a pretty rough time since Daddy's blown it with all his money-making schemes and I got sick and Mary took off and...

BARTH

That's it! It's brilliant. A game show
-- the contestants are tragedy-ridden...
the most heart-breaking story wins. I'm
talking cancer, amputation, child abuse
-- kiddie porn is a hot topic...

CATHY THROWS UP HER HANDS AS BARTH
CONCEIVES HIS PILOT.

MARTHA AND GEORGE ENTER.

BARTH (CONT'D)

Martha! George! Come here quick. I've
had an inspiration here. A new game show.
I'll call it... Born Losers. Please,
come help me work this out. You guys
pretend you're the contestants. Each of
you will have a tragic story to tell...

GEORGE HOLDS BACK.

MARTHA

Oh, George, come on. Barth has a new game
for us to play.

GEORGE

I'm in no mood for games. How are you
feeling, princess?

CATHY

I'm okay, Daddy.

MARTHA

(TO GEORGE ONLY) Play the game, George.
It might be fun for Cathy.

GEORGE

Okay, Gimble, what do we do?

BARTH

We'll try to create it as we go along. . .
But this is more than just a game, if we
can sell it to a network, there'll be big
money in it for us. There's nothing like
a "created by" credit to keep a family in
wealth and luxury. (SOTTO TO GEORGE)
Not to mention kidneys.

GEORGE

(SOLD) Yeah?! How do we start?

BARTH SITS THE THREE OF THEM IN A
ROW, FACING HIM AT TABLE.

BARTH

Okay, you're the contestants and I'm the
emcee. Each of you will have a turn to
tell your tragic story -- I'm talking
heartbreak here. That's going to be the
key to success for Born Losers. You
want some help with your stories?

GEORGE

You mean make something up?

BARTH

Right. Listen -- George, you be Billy
Sparado, a farmer who just lost his entire
herd of dairy cows to an anthrax epidemic
and now he doesn't have any money left to
send his eight children through school.
Hell, he doesn't have enough to buy them
food.

(MORE)

BARTH (CONT'D)

And you, Martha, you can be Gild Belski. Your husband has just left you and your blind sister and now your house has burned down. And you, Cathy, you be... oh, you can be yourself. Unless you don't want to. I could make up a new tragedy for you.

CATHY

My problems are plenty for me right now, thanks.

BARTH

Great. Here we go. (AS M.C.) Hello, everybody, I'm Barth Gimble, and this is Born Losers.

MARTHA CLAPS. BARTH NODS APPROVINGLY.

BARTH (CONT'D)

This is the last-ditch show for the genuine pathetic. We have pre-interviewed all our contestants and we guarantee that these are the bona fide losers of society. These are the dregs. We defy you not to weep your eyes out today. The winner of today's show will win our grand prize package, including gifts especially designed to see them through their trying lives.

GEORGE

This is awful.

MARTHA

I think it's fun. Go on, Barth.

BARTH

(M.C.) Let's meet today's contestants.

(TO MARTHA) Mrs. Belski... (FEIGNING
GREAT AND HEAVY CONCERN, AS A MOTHER
MIGHT HER EIGHT-YEAR-OLD CHILD)... what
happened to you!?

MARTHA

(INTO IT) Well, Mr. Belski, my recently
departed husband...

BARTH

Died?

MARTHA

I hope so. Because the day after he left
our house burned down and now my blind
sister and I don't have any place to live.
And now her hearing is going, too.

BARTH

That was very good, really very good.
Next we have Billy Sparado. Billy?

GEORGE

This is stupid...

BARTH

Think residuals, George. Every time the
show is on, you get a piece of the action.

GEORGE

(IT'S NOT SO STUPID) I'm a farmer and my
whole herd of cows...

MARTHA

Dairy cows.

GEORGE

All right... my whole herd of dairy cows were killed in an anthrax epidemic. I could really use that grand prize package. Okay?

BARTH

Not bad. We can work on it. Next, we have Cathy Shumway, of Fernwood, Ohio. Cathy, what's your sad story.

CATHY

Do I have to?

BARTH

Have some fun, Cath.

MARTHA

(HAPPY) This is fun...

CATHY

All right. (STRAIGHTFORWARD, EXPRESSIONLESS)
I recently found out that I'm suffering from a severe kidney disease and I need a transplant very badly. There is a form of treatment, but it's too expensive for my family to afford...

SUDDENLY GEORGE AND MARTHA ARE NOT
SO VERY INTO THE GAME, RESIDUALS
OR NOT.

CATHY (CONT'D)

... since we have had a number of financial
set-backs recently.

(MORE)

CATHY (CONT'D)

My sister's kidney would probably be compatible, but we have no idea where she is, since she ran off with another man and deserted her husband and daughter. (TO BARTH) Do you want to hear about my stolen baby?

GEORGE

Hold it!! Stop! No more.

MARTHA

I don't think I like this game any more. Could we play Monopoly instead?

BARTH

Oh, come on. That story was great. Come on, Cathy, keep going.

GEROGE

Get out of here, Gimble. Out! (GETS UP AND ESCORTS BARTH TO DOOR) Out! And you can keep your residuals. (TO MARTHA AND CATHY) That show's never going to go, anyway.

MARTHA

Can I get you a Coke, Cathy?

CATHY

(SMILING) Please. (STARTS CHUCKLING)

GEORGE

What's so funny?

CATHY

That was the most offensive idea for a game show I've ever heard in my life. And Barth Gimble really thought it was a great idea.

GEORGE

I still don't see the joke. He was going to have you say all those things on television if he got the chance.

CATHY

(GIGGLING) I know. Can you imagine? And what about poor Billy and Gilda? How do you think they must've felt?

LAUGHS. GEORGE AND MARTHA EXCHANGE LOOKS. SMILE.

MARTHA

(TO GEORGE) At least it cheered her up.

GEORGE

Well, it depressed the hell out of me. That Gimble is weirder than his brother. And his brother was very weird.

CATHY

Oh, sure, he's probably the greediest, most opportunistic creature I've ever met. But he was right about laughing. I feel a whole lot better now. I wonder if he didn't do it all to cheer me up.

MARTHA

I don't care if it was on purpose or not,
I'm just happy to see you laughing,
sweetheart.

GEORGE

Maybe he isn't such a horse's ass after
all.

BARTH RE-ENTERS, MAGAZINES IN HAND.

BARTH

Oh, Cathy, since you didn't have any
magazines I brought you some. (HANDS
HER OLD COPIES OF LIFE) Now you can tell
everyone you have lotsa Life even if you
haven't any Time.

CATHY

(LAUGHING) And there's nothing like a
horse's ass to loosen things up.

MARTHA AND GEORGE SMILE BENIGNLY
ON THEIR PRINCESS AS WE:

FADE OUT.

ACT THREEMARY'S KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

TOM HAS SET UP A TABLE SAW AND IS CUTTING A SECTION OF WALL PANELING. THERE ARE STACKS OF WOOD, TOOLS, WALLPAPER ROLLS, BUCKETS OF PASTE, ETC., ALL OVER. PART OF THE DINETTE WALL HAS ALREADY BEEN RE-PANELLED. KNOCK ON BACK DOOR.

TOM

Come in!

GEORGE AND MARTHA ENTER, BEARING CATHY ON HER STRETCHER. TOM SETS UP SOME CHAIRS FOR HER TO LIE ACROSS.

TOM (CONT'D)

Here you go, put her down here.

GEORGE

How are you, Tom?

TOM

I'm okay. How 'bout you?

CATHY

I'm lousy, thanks.

GEORGE

Not true. She's doing fine.

TOM

She looks fine. You look fine, Cathy.

CATHY

Thanks, Tom.

MARTHA

(CHANGING SUBJECT) Tom? What are you doing to Mary's kitchen?

TOM

It's my kitchen , and I'm redoing it. The yellow wallpaper, the cute knickknacks everywhere -- it all just reminded me of Mary. But Mary's gone now and I have to accept it. I will not be haunted by her or her wallpaper. I have to learn to live without her.

CATHY

I hope I can.

TOM

Oh, I'm sorry, Cathy.

GEORGE

She's only been gone a few days.

TOM

She's gone for good, and we'd better all face it.

CATHY

She'd better not be, or else, pretty soon, I'll be gone for good, too.

MARTHA

(CRIES) My little girls.

GEORGE NIXES TEARS.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

(FALSE CHEER) Can I get you a Coke, sweetheart?

CATHY

No, thanks, Ma.

MARTHA

(CRIES) She doesn't even want a Coke.

GEORGE

(SOTTO TO TOM) Tom, you may be ready to go on without Mary, but for Cathy's sake, we have to find her.

TOM

I know. I'm sorry, George.

CATHY

Even if they don't find her, maybe they'll at least find her kidney.

GEORGE

Haven't the police made any progress?
How many curly-headed cops can be having illicit affairs with mid-western housewives with braids up at Niagara Falls this time of year?

TOM

I'm sure they're checking everything.

MARTHA

What's going to happen to Cathy if we can't find Mary?

GEORGE

It'll be okay. We still have options.
We can try to locate a stranger to donate a kidney.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Or there is a treatment that can keep her going for awhile. But it costs an awful lot of money. With the way things have been going lately, I don't want to slate Cathy's life on my coming up with a big bankroll in a hurry.

KNOCK KNOCK. FERMIN ENTERS.

FERMIN

(TO CATHY) There you are. Young lady, you should be flat on your back resting those tired kidneys of yours, not gallivanting around.

CATHY

(ON STRETCHER) I am flat on my back.

FERMIN

Well, just stay there. (POKES HER IN BACK) Does that hurt?

CATHY

(YOU BET) Oww!

FERMIN

(AS IF HE KNEW) Ahhh. (BEAT) What's the word on Mary? I hate to rush everyone, but I'd like to see this transplant done as soon as possible.

TOM

What about another donor?

FERMIN

Kidney donors are few and far between these days. There's a waiting list of ten thousand patients in the country. It's easier to get tickets to a Neil Diamond concert.

TOM

And none of us qualify?

CATHY

(CALMLY) I'm going to die, aren't I?

MARTHA

Oh no, my baby!!

CATHY

Don't get hysterical, Ma, but I think I should make a will.

GEORGE

Will? Princess, you don't have anything to leave anyone.

CATHY

I have my possessions. Heather would probably like my genuine simulated pearl earrings and my stereo. And I want to leave my kidneys to science.

GEORGE

You're such a good girl.

CATHY

Daddy, I want you to stand by Ma during all of this. Be nice to her.

GEORGE

Anything you say, sweetheart.

MARTHA

(TO CATHY) Make him put that in
writing.

KNOCK AND ENTER: H.V. JOHNSON.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

H.V.!

GEORGE

Come in, man. What did you find out?

TOM

Where's Mary? Is she here?

H.V.

No, she's not here yet.

TOM

(PUSHING FERMIN ASIDE) "Yet!" "Yet?"

Then she's on her way?!

H.V.

Actually, I'm not sure.

TOM

What do you mean? She wouldn't refuse
to come home to save her sister's life.

H.V.

No, she probably wouldn't. She always
did strike me as a very decent woman.
Fine woman. Except. of course, for
deserting her family without a word.

TOM

Watch it, H.V.

GEORGE

Have you got Mary or not?

H.V.

Actually, no.

TOM

Wasn't she there!?

H.V.

After extensive questioning of said
Dennis...

GEORGE

In English, H.V.!

H.V.

Mary wasn't there. She never showed up.

TOM

Mary never showed up? My God, where is
she?

GEORGE

Mary's gone for good.

CATHY

Oh, no!

MARTHA

One of my babies is lost forever, and the
other one is about to die...

SUDDENLY THE DOOR OPENS AND IN WALKS
... MARY.

MARY

Do you know that Heather left her
skateboard out on the driveway...?

ALL REACT, AS WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE #320